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ABSTRACT

A third-party evaluation was conducted to assess the accomplishments of a project designed to improve the quality and demonstrate the most effective methods/techniques of career education in four New Hampshire high schools. Accomplishments were assessed in the following areas: development of a staging model; curriculum infusion; school-community interflow; and learner outcome objectives. Several accomplishments were noted regarding the development of a staging model and curriculum infusion. It was concluded that attempts to increase the school-community interflow through structural change in the schools' basic operations was not consistently treated as a priority product objective. Since the project did not generate data needed for statistical analysis, the assessment of learner outcome objectives was based on the evaluator's observations at each site. These observations led to the following general conclusions: community representatives were involved in needs assessment at some sites but seldom involved in working committees; teachers at all sites were involved in curriculum infusion activities; counseling departments at three sites developed systems to monitor developmental activities and address neglected areas but they did not appear to initiate training for teachers and administrators; and administrators and policy makers at some sites increased their responsiveness to the group and articulation to the community, but they were seldom involved in working groups and have not yet installed structural changes. (BM)

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL CAREER EDUCATION MODEL

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

June, 1976

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL

CAREER EDUCATION MODEL

6/15/1975

FINAL EVALUATION

In accordance with the "Outline for Project Performance Reports," this Final Evaluation of the New Hampshire High School Career Education Model is presented in the following manner:

I. Implementation of the Evaluation Plan to Date
   - A. Research Design
   - B. Instruments
   - C. Data Collection Plans and Activities

II. Data Showing Project Accomplishments with Explanations of What Led to these Accomplishments

III. Data Indicating Lack of Success with Explanations of What Hindered Success

Section I: Implementation of the Evaluation Plan

NOTE: Many readers may wish to proceed immediately to Sections II and III on Project Accomplishments and Problems.

With the awarding of the Office of Education's Career Education grant to Keene State College, evaluation specifications were issued

and Northeast Superintendent and School Board Consulting Services, Inc. of Merrimack, New Hampshire was selected as the third-party evaluator, with Mr. Melvin Severance and Mr. Peter Fellenz performing the on-going evaluation activities. With one major exception, the evaluation design remains consistent with the design in the original proposal. The project expected to measure student learner outcomes with a standardized instrument such as the Career Maturity Inventory, (John O. Crites), or the Assessment of Career Development- American College Testing Program. However, the final contract negotiations with the Office of Education allowed only 2% to 3% of the grant to be applied to the third-party evaluation. These limited remaining resources are easily consumed in assessing structural change and the development of participants as managers of change. Students' outcome testing was no longer charged to the third-party devluation effort.

Research Design. The design addresses structural change objectives in terms of 1. the development of a utilized "step-by-step staging matrix for high school Career Education", 2. "the development and infusion of an infused curriculum by teachers and counselors", and 3. the "achievement of significant change at the high school level to significantly increase school-community interflow". In addition, learner outcomes, along with tentative indicators of success, were established for each of the participant groups: student bodies, teachers, counseling departments, administrators and policy makers, and community representatives.

Instruments. In measuring structural change, the project, and to

some degree the evaluators, have been dependent upon the accomplishment of structural change objective number one--a high school Career Education staging matrix or model. (Progress on this objective is discussed within the following sections.) The evaluators have not developed specific checklists to be used in data collection, such checklists interact with the needs assessments and goal setting activities accomplished at each of the four sites. On the other hand, the evaluators have utilized the indicators of success within the design to guide their observations of project activities, interviews of project central and site staff, and review of project records and projects.

The Spring of 1976 has left the evaluators dependent upon their observational and interpretive skills in assessing learner outcomes across the four sites. The range and variety of local site action and the limited resources which the final evaluation contract stipulated have precluded a common data collection procedure for the four sites. As we shall discuss below, the manner and mode in which the staging matrix or model was actually developed has obviated its usefulness as a tool for evaluation of growth at the four sites.

Data Collection Plans and Activities. The final evaluation contract placed a weighted emphasis upon observation of group processes at the various sites (twice per year for each site), and observation of central staff activities (especially as these activities involve interaction among themselves, the local participants, and the advisory committee.) Further data on the effectiveness of the change processes comes from site records, staff reports, site and central staff interviews, and a review of the products of the various working groups.

To date,(June 15, 1976), the evaluators have observed the major

two-day workshop at Keene, written an analysis of that workshop and discussed same with the central staff, observed the actions of various committees during visits to three of the four sites, (including lengthy pre and post interviewing sessions with the central staff responsible for each site as well as with key personnel at each site,). Finally, staff records have recently been reviewed at the central office and interviews have been conducted with the project director and his two full-time field staff.

Further activities have indluded a March, 1976 visit to the fourth site and four late Spring site visits to each of the sites. An end of the year analysis of the projected products or structural changes--the staging matrix, infused curriculum, and increased school-community interflow is also based upon interaction with the project's central staff both before and after the Spring visits.

Section II: Accomplishments

Before proceeding to an analysis of the individual structural change and participant outcome objectives, this evaluation team believes it is of value to briefly address what can be called a "macro-issue" in the implementation of any new grant: Does the project staff match the project's goals well enough to meet expected accomplishments and does the project show signs of implanting itself in local school systems so as to produce meaningful on-going working relationships? (NOTE: In a project where these questions are answered in the negative, there is little reason to proceed with a more detailed analysis of specific project objectives.)

In the case of this project, a credible staff has been brought together. The director has considerable experience in the management

of school-based Career Education projects, and the two full-time field staff have sufficient academic training and experience to build positive working relationships. The graduate intern of the staff is involved both in central office and, (to some degree), on-site activities. (Similar comments are made below regarding local site managers.)

As to the project's ability to implant itself in the local educational environment, the tentative answer is somewhat positive, yet too frequently ambiguous. As is discussed below, the "positive" relates to the accomplished selection of site managers, the establishment of various committees, and the holding of regular work sessions. The ambiguity lies in the lack of a percieved sense of urgency and lack of significant administrative involvement at several sites. (Limited interaction between project management and local administrators may also be relevant here.) Given these sites, can effective utilization of funded resources happen without such urgency and administrative involvement?

Objective One: The Staging Model

The meeting of structural objectives can now be analyzed. First, several accomplishments can be noted regarding the development of a staging model:

Accomplishments: Staging Model

* A project start-up conference, with good representation from each site, was held in Keene on Oct. 2-3. Two resource persons with national experience in Career Education and educational change made lengthy presentations. Participant interaction was quite high, questions were frequently structural in nature and showed a willingness and ability to percieve of curriculum change as encompassing more than the development of paper curriculum products.

* A draft of the model document was prepared prior to the conference; the twelve student outcomes, along with various descriptors for each, were reviewed through group processes.

* A revision of the draft, along with introductory information, was soon produced and distributed for site use in goal setting activities.

* The revised draft was mailed to relevant persons across the country for their critical response through an attached questionnaire. Initial response was good.

* Key personnel in the State Department of Vocational-Technical Education have been involved in the early development and critique of the model.

* The project director has involved the third-party evaluator and two curriculum specialists in lengthy reviews and critiques of the eventual matrix instrument.

* A cross-section of administrators and faculty of each school has been repeatedly involved in field-testing and instrument.

* The project director has responded to a portion of these overall critiques in the preparation of the final model/instrument.

* Despite the evaluative comments which will be offered below, the instrument as finally developed is internally consistent, gives examples of the range of implementation

in each domain, includes a scoresheet which should be of help to local users in building a profile of their school, and is professionally attractive and clean, so as to serve as a possible basis for others who may wish to choose this approach in further development of an instrument.

Objective Two: Creating an Infused Curriculum

A review of this objective will be fairly brief for several reasons; the evaluation contract concentrates on learner outcomes rather than products; at several sites the products themselves are still being completed as the Spring evaluation occurs; and the management and evaluators are in general agreement that the products have more value as reflections of processes within sites than as curriculum products ready for broad dissemination to classroom teachers. Following the suggested U.S.O.E. format, accomplishments will be listed here. Any lack of success will be discussed in a following section.

Accomplishments: Infused Curriculum

* Each site did develop a curriculum product. Three were for English and a fourth was integrated.

* Each used some standardized format so that once the reader picks up the system, he/she can survey a wide range of curriculum plans.

* Several sites utilized a broad learner outcome approach as a way of indicating gaps in present learner activities. (The evaluator found a display of healthy tension between current and future activities to be very helpful in getting an evaluative handle on the many pages of curriculum materials developed.)

* Some sites did take a step toward identifying evaluative techniques and resource materials for the related activities. For example, the "performance indicators" which one site identifies in its CAREER DECISION MAKING SKILLS unit are clean and specific. "Clean" means that the curriculum committee successfully avoided the muddy repetition which so often occurs at this evaluative level. Good indicators are more than a further disection of learner objectives or competencies (making social decisions is NOT

an indicator of decision making in general). When the CAREER DECISION MAKING SKILLS unit says, "After completing a standardized aptitude test, students will identify occupations which correspond to his/her test results", that unit has properly written performance indicators.

Objective Three: Increasing School Community Interflow

This structural change objective has not received the level of attention given to the development of a staging model or the creation of infused curriculum. "Interflow" is not a paper product. Measurement of its occurance is dependent upon two factors. First, there would be evidence that the individual school identified, developed, and implemented specific mechanisms for increasing the flow of students into the community and of community people into the school. Second, there would be sufficient baseline data to compare against some anticipated level of increased interflow.

A review of site observation notes, site and project records, and the products of the sites indicates that a goal of increased school-community interflow may be implicit in both the staging model and the curriculum products. However, the systematic identification of broad mechanisms for significant increase is not apparent. Furthermore, the project came to see itself as a pre-implementation project. There is no assertion that broad implementation has either occurred or can be measured at this date. (NOTE: The planning process carried out at the sites did involve community members in school activities and did move some school members into the community.) The degree to which this process may continue or expand next year and thereafter, will be discussed at length in the following "Learned Outcomes' section. The above discussion simply observes that a"frontal attack" on dynamically

increasing interflow through structural change in the schools' basic operations was not consistently treated as a priority product objective during the year being concluded.

Section II: Accomplishments (Continued)
Learner Outcome Objectives

Both within the original proposal for funding and within the evaluation design as contained in the contract, emphasis is placed on articulating the indicators of success related to learner outcome objectives for the key groups of persons involved in site activities. To provide a framework for this key section, these objectives, (and a summarized version of the indicators of success), are not presented.

LEARNER OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: The community representatives shall become integrally involved in the working sessions as they not only react to others but as they all initiate recommendations and strategies for structural change.

COMMUNITY SHALL BE:

1. Involved in developing the change model and selecting the participants at all levels.

2. Integrate community needs and related resources in a comprehensive needs assessment.

3. Play a role in analyzing assessment data and shaping goals and objectives.

4. Develop a leadership role in calling meetings and moving items from group to general committee.

5. Become involved in project evaluation and utilize access to project records and staff.

LEARNER OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: The teachers at each of the four high schools will be part of the structural reshaping of the curriculum so as to incorporate Career Education Concepts.

1. Within work sessions they will develop written descriptions of the present academic curriculum in their area.

2. They will develop a list of career education goals acceptable to the LEA.

3. They shall specify student outcomes that are career related.

4. They shall develop methods of infusing career education into each academic "element", (poetry, the essay, etc.).

LEARNER OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: The counseling departments will develop the career guidance program developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education and the N.H.Personnal & Guidance Association.

1. Maintain a matrix of developmental activities, implementation to date, identification and addressing of activities being neglected.

2. Initiate training for teachers and administrators.

3. Establish and maintain career guidance controls with evaluative inventory of materials and resources.

4. Work periodically with teachers in both classroom and group guidance sessions.

LEARNER OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: Administrators and policy makers shall increase ability to understand and act upon needed structural changes for curriculum infusion, career guidance, and school-community interflow through the following:

1. On-going participation in working groups.

2. Responsiveness to the group and articulation to the community.

3. Presenting two structural changes, (have at least one installed).

If this were a more traditional evaluation project, a variety of data tables could now be presented. Then statistical techniques could be used to ascertain whether significant growth had occurred. As this project did not generate such a data base, the writer will here present a summary of his observations at each site.

An effort was made to observe site participants in those types of activities which would best illustrate such questions as -- Does the site feel ownership of its products, and processes?, Does it have an integral and critical grasp of its efforts so that it can continue remodeling and further the development process? Does the site demonstrate an ability to sell its work throughout the school, community and the state?

The following site summaries will continue the practice of not referring to sites by name. In addition to the reasons given in the interim evaluation, we must now emphasize that the match between the evaluator's schedule and that of site activities meant that some sites had a better chance to "show their best" through advisory council meetings or dissemination conferences. The reader is encouraged to read the report in big chunks, to hold it at arm's length. Look for broad strokes showing the direction of movement rather than for your own face. This report is not an evaluation of any individual or any specific site. (This section will conclude by comparing the four site descriptions to the Learner Outcome Objectives. Some tentative generalizations will be made regarding overall project performance.)

Site #1

At this site the evaluator was able to observe an Advisory Council meeting. As the meeting was attended by representatives of all site activities, and as the agenda included reports and planning of the Advisory Committee and of the working committees--Guidance/Community Committee and Curriculum Committee--and as both the dissemination conference and end-of-the-year strategy for recommendations to the school committee were treated, the observation of this meeting was an excellent basis for some broad interpretations of growth among the participants.

Fourteen persons attended. This included the high school principal, a school committee member, four community members, one student and seven members of the high school staff. First the school committee member summarized a Child Development survey conducted among the students - much of the work had been done by the student who was present, and most of the

members took part in the discussion. Differences between psychological/ sociological approach and a more practical approach were clearly developed. The principal took initiative to discuss how this matter could be brought to the School Committee for possible action.

Second, the site coordinator reported on a Career Education and Social Studies workshop. The report was comprehensive and interpretive; the response was lively. Third, the chairperson of the Curriculum Committee reported on a decision-making workshop and on a Cobb County Career Education Workshop. Again, the report was clear and interpretive. The discussion then moved to a report on the editing of "New Hampshire Jobs" so as to reduce sex stereotyping of jobs described therein. The few responses were somewhat joking in tone and raises some questions as to how seriously this particular national Career Education Objective is being considered.

Fourth, the Guidance/Community Committee presented its planning product and clearly analyzed the value of the process utilized. A community member questioned the number of technical terms used in the format. The School Committee member also noted that this could limit community understanding. After much discussion a staff member questioned whether an expanded glossary was a sufficient way of dealing with the issue of technical terminology.

Fifth, the Curriculum Committee chairperson reported on utilization of the Decisions Booklet. Again, the presentation and interaction was clear and lively. Sixth, the plans for the upcoming dissemination workshop were reviewed. Seventh, a lively discussion was generated on the project's staging model instrument and on whether the instrument would have "saved a lot of time" had it been available at the beginning of the

year. The contribution of a community member was particularly noteworthy - How could the instrument have saved time when an in-depth study of the school must take place before the instrument can be fruitfully completed?

The meeting concluded with the shaping of steps necessary to make clear recommendations to the School Committee. While the evaluators are unaware of School Committee action now being taken, the recent receipt of materials from the Advisory Committee's subsequent planning session indicates that such recommendations are clear, forceful, and recognize various fiscal options.

Site #2.

At this site the evaluator was able to interview the site manager and meet jointly with the site manager, the Curriculum Committee, (made up of English Department members), and the Guidance Committee. The site manager shared some materials on the forth-coming dissemination conference and described the curriculum revision actions of the English Department. According to the site manager, the high school was ready to evaluate and change the English Curriculum. The New Hampshire Career Education Project injected sensitivity to the needs of students and employer needs, as well as an accent on basic skills. The department also moved from its minicourse curriculum using data from the needs assessment.

At the guidance level, the site manager spoke of the recommendations to the School Committee on a revised testing program, and of the Resource Center now being used. Increased attention to the now college-bound was also noted. Upon questioning, the manager acknowledged

a lack of student and community involvement in the activities particular to this project. A lack of sufficient time was given as a reason for this lack of involvement.

The joint meeting of the Curriculum and Guidance Committees gave the evaluator limited insight into the developmental process. Materials and other arrangements needed for the forthcoming dissemination conference were reviewed. The evaluator raised several questions on the value of the year's efforts. The participants remarked that the direction was of benefit to the fifty percent of the students not college-bound. Response was mixed on whether the Career Education project had significant impact on the eventual revision of the English curriculum. Finally, the question of student involvement in committee actions brought the reaction that students have a real capacity to contribute but that such involvement was delayed until the committees had time to pull themselves together first.

Site #3.

At the third site, the evaluator was able to interview the site manager, the head counselor, a school administrator and two teachers from the Curriculum Committee. The site manager noted that both working committees had developed their programs and that project funds were being used to purchase a wide variety of Career Education materials. Remaining funds were available to hire a short-term full-time Resource Specialist to develop implementation guidelines for a Career Education Resource Center.

While saying he hadn't given much thought to Staff Development AS SUCH, the site manager noted that any member of working committees

could explain the final reports, that both the English and Foreign Language Departments had good commitment from their chairpersons, and that successful needs assessment activities had drawn a School Committee commitment to on-going follow-up of graduates.

The counselor interview produced observations that the project had helped to create the time for a total revision of the departments' approach. The school is ready to implement a system for reaching all students in terms of their needs. While the system was largely adapted from Deleware, the project did give the counselors fresh, local needs assessment data and the opportunity to tie their ideas to the English Department's Decision Making Curriculum.

The counselor did note that the involvement of students and community members had been limited, that while the counselors themselves were happy with their product, most people in the school will still be watching, (through conferences and implementation), before "buying into" Career Education.

The interview with the administrator was fairly brief. To the degree that he had been able to become familiar with project activities, the administrator knows that the participants are pleased with their efforts. As an administrator, he plans on taking their advise next year.

Finally, two members of the Curriculum Committee gave the evaluator considerable time to explore their work and expectations for next year. The school is now ready to take a structural approach to Decision Making and Value Clarification. This site was less willing to speak enthusiastically about the"process" they had used. Both teachers felt that their committee members had already been familiar with various

needs assessment processes and that no new process was needed. They did note that the group had learned to share.

Both were concerned that administrative involvement continue to grow. Such involvement appears necessary if Career Education is to move beyond a few departments and if it is to be bigger than a few teachers now committed to it.

The faculty interviewees were pleased the community member became involved in activities of the project and that a very positive attitude toward such involvement was generated. As for student involvement, they observed that the size of the Advisory Committee may have been too large to be really active. They did not believe that student involvement on the Curriculum Committee itself had been suggested.

In concluding, the faculty members noted that the "Career Ed" tag might not be useful in further implementation, but that project efforts had increased the chances of all students - - including the college-bound - - to broaden their outlook and to be familiar with practical world of work matters.

Site #4.

At this site the evaluator had his best opportunity to see whether those involved in project activities are now able to share their work with others. More than forty attended from five neighboring schools and from another project site. The site manager, superintendent, state consultant, project director, principal, Curriculum Committee member, and Guidance Committee member all made presentations and handled questions. During most of the day the attention level remained high, (e.g. eyes forward, questions from many in audience).

First the site manager gave a thorough contextual introduction. Second, the superintendent talked with breadth, vigor and a sense of questioning and personal involvement about a competency based approach and career clusters concept, which produces options for the student.

Third, the state consultant reviewed the National Career Education scene while the project director discussed state action and emphasized the goal of making Career Education a structural aspect of the system rather than a"bolt-on"phenomenon.

Fourth, the principal gave an overview and then introduced the Oregon film on a competency approach. Questioning was lively with good interaction among the participants themselves. In answer to a question from the evaluator, it seems that the community has had limited involvement in the competency based approach. Several actions have involved the site's Advisory Committee in providing information on Career Education aspects of this effort.

Fifth, a member of the Guidance Committee reviewed the activities of this committee. While saying that the early stage involved "keeping minutes and wasting hours", he proceeded to describe how a clusters approach would help a student determine a path through high school. Following the presentation there was good interaction among the participants.

Sixth, a Curriculum Committee member described its work. After a few comments critiquing the process - - "So much time to come out with so little" and "We came up with a beautiful chart but don't know what to do with it" - - the speaker did note how the committee addressed a few broad issues and proceeded from there. He noted that good development depended on interaction between goal and indicator levels, and that

progress occurred when the committee asked, "Ideally, what should be happening in the classroom?"

During good participant interaction, the speaker noted that their committee was now more proud of the process than of the product, and that the process works only if the group finds its own starting point - "What is Career Education?" - and determines its own approach to needs assessment.

At a most practical level, the paying of staff during the period of frustration was said to be essential. Without such funds, a system would need administrative leadership within some on-going history of action.

LEARNER OUTCOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS can now be tentatively identified. Any lack of success will be treated in the concluding section of the report. All comments will follow the evaluation design format summarized previously.

Community representatives did become involved in needs assessment at two, (possibly three), sites. In those cases, they did have access to project staff and may have been somewhat involved in data analysis.

Teachers at the sites were involved in describing their present curriculum. Those on the Curriculum Committee usually shaped some list of goals and related these to School Committee policy. They did rework the Career Education Model materials on student outcomes. They usually developed preliminary methods for "infusing" Career Education into a particular academic discipline.

Counseling departments at three of the sites developed some sort of matrix or systems approach to monitor developmental activities and address neglected areas. Periodic working relationships between

counselors and teachers were likely improved - but to a limited degree - at three or possibly all four of the schools.

Administrators and policy makers: to a limited degree - at several of the sites increased their responsiveness to the group and perhaps their articulation to the community. One or two structural changes may have been recommended.

Section III: Lack of Success

This evaluator finds it difficult to concentrate on such issues when the evaluation no longer is of formative value to the individual project. Believing that several policy makers and a few site staff may study this report, the following, (hopefully concise), remarks are offered.

1. At the level of basic implementation, (staffing, meetings, reports), both central and site staffs "did their jobs".

2. On the matter of community involvement in working committees, the decision appears to have been made early in the project to place them in an advisory role.

3. In like manner, the decision to make this a planning - rather than implementation year - appears to have been made fairly early in the project year.

4. The central staff seemed quite excited about the "process" and remains so to this date. The evaluators, however, have throughout the project year been unable to find a "process" which is sufficiently open and aggressive to meet the commitment reflected in the original design.

Following on these remarks, the following "Lack of Success" observations are made by the evaluators regarding structural change objectives and learner outcome objectives.

The Staging Model is highly introspective and not observation based. The original proposal says a good model will overcome the administrative tendency to say, "Career Ed, we are already doing it, (Whatever "it" is!)." The assessment instrument as eventually developed sacrifices clarity for a reduction of percieved threat. A "needs work" category stays in although it is not mutually exclusive with other categories. The indicators of performance rely heavily upon paper documentation which can be manipulated rather then upon observational criteria.

The Infused Curriculum objective received focal attention across the sites. While some implementation at each site during the second semester may likely have improved the quality of the products, the evaluators are ready to assert that several sites did avert the "Let's reinvent the wheel with Learning Activity Packages" syndrome.

Increasing School-Community Interflow was not the focus of attention. Limited successes are discussed in the preceeding section. Lack of successes are treated under Learner Outcomes below.

Learner Outcome Lack of Successes will again follow the evaluation design format. First, community representatives were seldom involved in working committees. Both the change model and the other participants were defined prior to their involvement. They did not play a leadership role in calling meetings.

Teachers were usually involved in the manner originally described.

Counseling departments did not appear to initiate training for teachers and administrators. They worked with classroom teachers to a limited degree.

Administrators and policy makers were seldom involved in working groups and have not yet installed structural changes.

SUMMARY

If this project is to be valued by its comparison to general Career Education projects at the high school level, then various project participants can take some pride in their efforts.

If value is determined by the massive need for secondary education to intersect with twentieth century economic realities and by the extent to which the project and sites have initiated a flight plan which can cross this domain, then the evaluators encourage broader strategies at all levels - local, state and national - for meeting such a need.